

that led to ANCSA. It was many years in development. There were field hearings that took place in Alaska in 1968, 1969—3 years before the passage of ANCSA.

Incredibly proud and determined first peoples from all over the State—Tlingit, Haida, Athabascan, Inupiat, Yupik, Aleut—travel to Anchorage, to Fairbanks to give their testimony in field hearings to U.S. Senators. Some of them had never even left their villages. Some of them didn't even speak English.

Many were veterans—and I am going to talk briefly about that. Dozens and dozens of young men and women, old men and women, all of them testifying before U.S. Senators and Congressmen, telling their stories of how they lived off the land and the rights that they needed for thousands of years on the land.

They told stories of strong and resilient people who had been able to thrive in some of the harshest conditions in the planet. But as I mentioned earlier, they also told stories of health challenges.

The first AFN president, Emil Notti, who is still a great leader in Alaska, then only 36 years old, spoke with passion at these hearings and heartbreak about the conditions in rural Alaska.

He said to a group of Senators in a hearing:

The indigenous people of Native Alaska are the victims of sickness, crippling conditions and premature death to a degree exceeded in very few parts of the world.

He told the committee then that life expectancy for the average Native Alaskan was 34 years old. This is in the late 1960s. The average life expectancy in the United States at that time was 69—34 years old to 69.

Many spoke of how much they had sacrificed for their country. And this is an issue I never tire of talking about. Alaska Natives serve at higher rates in the U.S. military than any other ethnic group in the country. So they are fighting for their country in World War II and Korea and Vietnam, and they are coming home and they are being denied fundamental rights themselves.

Here is what Jerome Trigg, a leader and a marine from Nome, had to tell U.S. Senators who were in Alaska. His testimony was said to have brought tears to the eyes of many. He looked at the U.S. Senators and said this: We have showed our patriotism as proudly as any Americans on Earth. We have answered the call of duty with pride in serving in our military. In World War II, we answered the call 100 percent. Every man—old and young—in every village volunteered with the Alaska National Guard.

On Vietnam, which was raging at the time, he said: I have never heard of an Alaska Native burning their draft card or our Nation's flag. We love our land, and we will sacrifice and fight to protect it.

He concluded with this thought, which I love: "Sometimes I think the

wrong people are running this hearing and taking our testimony," he said to the Senators. "It seems that [maybe] we should be on the bench and you people should be . . . giving [us] the testimony."

I love that—strong words from Marine Jerome Trigg, who had a very important point to make.

So many in our communities testified in front of Congress. One happened to be a beautiful, young Alaska Native woman in her thirties from the village of Rampart named Mary Jane Fate, who not only worked on this but came to Washington, DC, to lobby U.S. Senators to pass ANCSA. I had the very great privilege of being the son-in-law of that great Native woman who, unfortunately, passed away recently. That was my mother-in-law, Mary Jane Fate, who came to this body and made sure Senators understood what was happening in Alaska and got them to vote for ANCSA 50 years ago.

So here is what it did in a nutshell. As I mentioned, it was the largest indigenous land settlement in the history of the country: 44 million acres of land, almost a billion dollars from the State and Federal Government to transfer land in fee simple—not the reservation system like you have in the lower 48, which was a huge innovation at the time. They own this land. It is theirs. It is not held in trust by the United States like it is in the lower 48 on Indian reservations.

Congress mandated the creation of for-profit Alaska Native corporations solely owned by Alaska Native shareholders. Twelve of these regional corporations and 200 village ANCs were created by the Congress. Sometimes people talk about ANCs as if they were some foreign entity. They were actually created right here 50 years ago.

What did all of this do? It provided economic opportunity. These were not typical entities, but they were more than just corporations. They were kind of a combination: social, cultural, economic. They passed on the values to the different shareholders.

One of the great things about ANCSA was that it required, actually, the sharing of revenues. Some of these regional corporations did very well; others didn't. There were provisions early on that said, if these corporations are doing great and these aren't, there is going to be some sharing. It was called the 7(i) provision. These provisions have been critical to the survival of ANCs, which regional ANCs at times, as I mentioned, were receiving more revenue than others.

So that day 50 years ago—December 18, 1971—was really an important day for our State. How has it worked out? It has worked out well, but, of course, we always have more work to do.

Over the last 50 years, the Alaska Native people have managed their lands to foster sustainable businesses, created employment opportunities for all people—Native and non-Native—in Alaska, across the country, and across

the globe. They have become the heart and soul of our economy in Alaska, employing thousands of both Alaska Native and non-Native people.

And they have prospered with their own initiative and with innovative approaches to fostering economic development through self-determination. And beyond the economic benefits, these ANCs, these groupings, these shareholders in these Alaska Native entities created right here on this floor, provided benefits in terms of culture, language revitalization, scholarships, burials, funeral assistance, and an enormous focus on education. Over 54,000 individual scholarships were given to younger Alaska Native people.

And, importantly, this law, passed by this body, gave the Native people the opportunity to thrive; to continue to live on their land, practice their culture, create leaders throughout the State. In what was once one of the most impoverished places in the country are now, in many areas, strong, dynamic—health, education, housing, food security, and sanitation have all improved immensely.

We have a long way to go. There is still a lot of misunderstanding. In Alaska, you have Tribes, Tribal members, you have ANCs, and shareholders. These are the Native people. You have crossover. And sometimes there is a misunderstanding.

For example, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act specifically excluded tens of thousands of Alaska Natives because they were members of an organization that Congress created. My own view was that was outrageous.

So that is why we need to keep educating our colleagues here. But overall, this was a story of success, of resilience, of what can happen when you allow people to take charge of their own destiny. It is a story of self-determination and, in many ways, heroism, and it is a story for the ages.

I am honored to represent these people, wonderful people—many of whom the leaders are still alive who made this happen 50 years ago—and their children and grandchildren. We have more work to do, but 50 years ago, on December 18, 1971, it was the start of a new, positive, innovative chapter in the history of Alaska. And that is why Senator MURKOWSKI and I wanted to celebrate this very important milestone this afternoon.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have 3 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND  
TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 16, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, December 16, 2021, at 9 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Section 1295b(h) of title 46 App., United States Code, as amended by Public Law 101-595, and upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, appoints the following Senators to the Board of Visitors of the United States Merchant Marine Academy: The Honorable MARIA CANTWELL of Washington (ex officio as Chair, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation); The Honorable TAMMY DUCKWORTH of Illinois (Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation).

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER  
17, 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Friday, December 17; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; that upon the conclusion of morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Gawande nomination; further, that the cloture motions filed during yesterday's session of the Senate ripen at 10 a.m.; and that if any of the nominations are confirmed during Friday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, for the information of Senators, the first vote of the day is expected at 10 a.m. We expect additional rollcall votes throughout the day.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senator SULLIVAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO SHARI DAUGHERTY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is Thursday. The Senate is still very busy here. We have a lot of work to do, as we are all trying to get home for the holidays. And I thought it was still the appropriate time to come down and talk about somebody who is making our State such a great State, somebody who is contributing to the community, somebody who I refer to as our Alaskan of the Week.

Now, we have been doing this for, gosh, going on almost 6 years, maybe 5 years. But it is always one of my favorite times of week, even when the speech is late. So I appreciate the majority leader and the Presiding Officer letting us stay open here for one more speech. And I know the pages—I mean, they love the Alaskan of the Week. So this is a little bit of a treat.

But I always start this speech with a little bit of an update on what is going on in Alaska. So right now, Utqiagvik, formerly known as Barrow—that is Point Barrow. That is the northernmost community in North America. They haven't seen the sun in nearly a month. The sun went down, and it is not rising again until January 23. So they get a lot of darkness. There are 66 days of darkness. Great people up there. Wonderful people up there. I love it up there.

We have had some pretty significant cold spells already. That, for now, doesn't seem to be lifting. It was 40 below 0 in Fairbanks yesterday. In Anchorage, the high was 4 degrees above 0. Forty below is chilly. Tough people throughout the State. Four degrees above is pretty cold for Anchorage.

But everybody is excited because Christmas is right around the corner, and it is, of course, a great time to be in Alaska. We do have a place—I was just talking with the Presiding Officer and the majority leader. We have a great community in Interior Alaska called North Pole, AK. Santa actually lives there. We have a city council member in North Pole named Santa Claus, and a reindeer there.

And, of course, I am like everybody else here, looking forward to getting home, going to Midnight Mass, eating my special Alaska seafood Newburg, having friends over, and family, of course. And I think we all know we are very fortunate. I, certainly, believe I am a very blessed man.

And we are blessed in Alaska because of people like Shari Daugherty, who is our Alaskan of the Week. And so I want to talk a little bit about Shari because what she has done is literally the definition of the Christmas spirit.

For the last month, as she has done for the last 30 years, she has been

working pretty much around the clock, volunteering her time for the nonprofit Share the Spirit. Share the Spirit—that is the nonprofit that Shari helped found in 1992—30 years.

Share the Spirit's mission is to make sure that hundreds of less fortunate families in Homer, AK, her hometown, get all of the ingredients for a proper Christmas dinner and presents for the kids.

Share the Spirit—it sounds pretty simple, but, as you can imagine, this is no easy task. And Shari would tell you that it involves so many others in Homer to make sure that the children in the community, who might not otherwise have anything under the tree, can experience the magic of Christmas that every child deserves.

So who is Shari, this great volunteer who has been doing incredible work in Homer? Originally from Chico, CA, Shari and her parents moved to Homer when she was in the 10th grade. Her father was a fisherman.

And for those of you who have been to Homer or want to come to Homer, I will tell you, it is one of the most stunningly beautiful places in all of America—really, in all of the world. It is known as the "Halibut Fishing Capital of the World." But anyone who goes there falls in love with Homer. It is surrounded by the glistening waters of Kachemak Bay, jagged mountains, glaciers, snowcapped volcanoes, and a great tight-knit community.

After college at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, Shari moved around a little. But in 1991, she came back home with her daughter. She did so because she had family there in Homer. And even if she didn't, as she put it, she had a whole town full of family in Homer.

Now, volunteering was in her blood. She said her mom stressed the importance of giving back to the community since she was a young girl. So she almost immediately joined the Emblem Club. That is the unofficial auxiliary of the Elks. And during one of their first meetings, it was announced that a Christian minister's group that every year provided food and presents for people in the community was actually going to disband.

A meeting was called. The talking lasted for a very long time—at such volunteer meetings, that can happen, of course—until Shari finally cut in and said: Hey, guys, we are really burning daylight here. Here is what needs to happen: We need to form a committee, form a plan, form a nonprofit, and get busy—get busy.

And as such things go, she and another woman, Norma Foust, were put in charge. And boy, did they make a difference. That year, with Christmas only weeks away, a nonprofit was formed and a fundraiser to organize with the help of a strong community. They put together 57 baskets of food: turkey, stuffing, potato, sugar, salt, eggs, celery, pie crusts, cards with recipes on them—all the fixings for a nice